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Gowon urges national unity, denies civil war was rooted in hate

By Friday Omosola

Former Nigerian Head of State, Yakubu Gowon, has said that the Nigerian Civil War was not driven by hostility or ethnic resentment but was a difficult decision aimed at safeguarding the nation's unity.

Gowon spoke during the 5th Convention of the Christian Men's Fellowship (CMF), held at St. Matthew's Anglican Church in Maitama yesterday in Abuja.

The 91-year-old statesman reflected on the burdens of leadership during one of Nigeria's darkest periods.

The event also saw him honoured with a Lifetime Integrity and Achievement Award.

"The civil war was one of the hardest phases of my life. I didn't choose it, but I was placed in that position and had to act to prevent the country from falling apart," Gowon said.

"It was never about hate. There was always love and mutual respect among our people."

Recalling personal losses from the conflict, Gowon mourned the death of his friend, Major Arthur Unegbe, for whom he served as best man, noting the human toll the war took on both leaders and citizens.

He credited prayer and moral conviction as guiding principles throughout his time in office and beyond.

"Everything I do is through prayer," he said. "I ask God for the wisdom to act justly, in line with His will and in love for the nation. At the end of it all, we said, 'No victor, no vanquished.'"

Gowon commended Nigeria's progress since the end of the war and urged citizens to continue striving for national harmony.

"I ask for your prayers—for this country to remain united, regardless of our religious differences, whether Christian, Muslim, or otherwise."

Alongside Gowon, two other individuals were recognised for their contributions to the Church and society.



The Primate of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), Archbishop Henry Ndukuba, who presided over the ceremony, encouraged Christian men to embrace honour, integrity, and moral courage.

"The Lord is still seeking men of principle and truth," the Archbishop declared, urging members to live out the 'four Hs'—heart, head, habit, and humility.

Angela Ndukuba, President of the Mothers' Union and Women's Guild, praised the honourees as men who have remained steadfast in faith despite a changing moral climate.

"They have stood firm in service to God and the Church, even in old age," she said.

In a message delivered on behalf of former President Goodluck Jonathan, Prof John-Kennedy Opara, former Executive Secretary of the Nigerian Christian Pilgrims Commission, hailed the awardees as vessels used by God to uplift the nation.

"These men have impacted lives

positively and demonstrated integrity throughout their journeys," Opara stated, quoting Psalm 25:14:

"The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him, and He will show them His covenant."

Professor Suleiman Bogoro, former Executive Secretary of TETFund, also paid tribute to Gowon, describing him as a man of rare integrity who declined to enrich himself during Nigeria's oil boom.

"He left office without building a personal residence—something that set him apart from many of his contemporaries," Bogoro said.

The convention, which drew participants from across the Abuja Diocese and beyond, centred on the theme: 'Men of Honour: Living with Integrity in a Culture of Deceit,' based on Psalm 15:1–5.

The guest speaker was the Bishop of Ilesa, Rt Rev Professor Dapo Asaju, who challenged attendees to embody godly character in a morally compromised world.

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5X6	123,749.50
5X5	110,000.00
5X4	76,833.00
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8X5	143,500.00
8X4	93,500.00
8X3	82,434.50
7X4	111,173.50
6X4	82,434.50
6X3	59,250.00
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Tinubu reconciles with Sanwo-Olu, says 'rift is resolved'

By Friday Omosola



President Bola Tinubu has reconciled with Lagos State Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu, declaring an end to any past grievances.

Speaking during a private session with members of the Lagos State Governor's Advisory Council (GAC), the president affirmed that the matter had been settled, stating, "It's all over now. All is forgiven."

The conciliatory meeting, held behind closed doors, was initiated by the GAC, whose members appealed to Mr Tinubu

to forgive perceived offences by the governor and others within the Lagos political structure.

GAC Chairman, Alhaji Tajudeen Olusi, welcomed the president to Lagos and acknowledged that some tensions had existed between Mr Tinubu and certain individuals, particularly Mr Sanwo-Olu.

He urged the president to extend forgiveness and move forward.

Insiders present at the gathering revealed that Mr Tinubu assured the council that he no longer bore any ill will, specifically towards

Mr Sanwo-Olu.

In a symbolic gesture of humility and repentance, the governor and several council members reportedly prostrated before the president.

While the precise nature of the disagreement was not publicly discussed, the meeting centred on reconciliation and unity.

The president's acceptance of the plea was seen as a significant step toward restoring harmony within the state's political ranks.

Fire guts hotel housing 484 Nigerian pilgrims in Mecca, NAHCON reacts

By Damilola Olufemi



A fire broke out at a hotel housing 484 Nigerian pilgrims in Mecca on Saturday, according to the National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCON).

The incident occurred around noon local time on Shari Mansur Street, however, no casualties were recorded.

In a statement released by NAHCON spokesperson, Fatima Sanda Usara, the blaze was quickly brought under control thanks to the swift intervention of Saudi emergency services and the hotel management. All the affected pilgrims have since been relocated safely to Mina.

“Thanks to the prompt response from Saudi authorities and hotel staff, the fire was swiftly contained,

preventing further damage and ensuring the safety of all occupants,” Usara noted.

Following the incident, NAHCON Chairman/CEO, Professor Abdullahi Saleh Usman, accompanied by Alhaji Aliu Abdulrazak, Commissioner for Policy, Personnel Management, and Finance, and Director Alidu Shutti, Deputy Makkah Coordinator, visited the scene to assess the situation and oversee the welfare of the affected pilgrims.

“During the visit, Professor Abdullahi expressed concern over the incident and ordered the immediate relocation of all affected pilgrims to new accommodation. He sympathised with them and assured that NAHCON would do everything possible to lessen the impact of the incident,” the

statement read.

NAHCON boss glad no casualty recorded

The Chairman also thanked God for the absence of casualties and emphasised that the Commission was already working with the involved tour operators to ensure a smooth transition to the new accommodation. He and his team have inspected the new premises and finalised arrangements for the resettlement.

Both the Chairman and Commissioner commended the quick action taken by Saudi emergency responders and the cooperation from hotel staff.

NAHCON added that further information would be provided as necessary.

What you need know about Ojude Oba festival as millions attend

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi

The Ojude Oba Festival is a vibrant cultural spectacle celebrated annually by the Ijebu people in Ogun State, Nigeria. Regarded as one of the country's most prominent cultural events, the festival blends tradition, religion, pageantry, and community pride.

“Ojude Oba,” meaning “The King’s Court,” began as a simple gesture by Ijebu Muslims in the 19th century, who would gather shortly after Eid-el-Kabir to pay homage to their traditional ruler, the Awujale of Ijebuland. What started as a modest act of reverence has evolved into a nationally and internationally recognised event, drawing participants and spectators from across Nigeria and beyond.

Under the stewardship of the current Awujale, Oba Sikiru Adetona, the festival is held at the Awujale Pavilion in Ijebu Ode. The festival takes place on the third day after Eid-el-Kabir and is renowned for its dazzling display of Yoruba fashion and heritage. Participants arrive adorned in rich traditional fabrics like Adire, Aso Oke, Agbada, and Iro and Buba, each ensemble reflecting deep cultural narratives and social class.

Though paused in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19 precautions, the festival has since regained momentum, becoming an important fixture in Nigeria’s cultural calendar. The event is not just a celebration of Ijebu identity, but also a gathering of dignitaries, celebrities, and families, all united in celebration.

One of the festival’s main attractions is the grand horse parade. Members of the Balogun families — including Balogun Adenuga, Balogun Alatise, Balogun Adesoye, Balogun Alausa, and Balogun Kuku — ride in elaborate traditional attire, demonstrating valour and pageantry. Equally captivating is the Regberegbe, or age-grade parade, where groups such as Gbobaniyi, Bobagbimo, Gbotalaye, and Obafuwali engage in friendly competition through dance, prayers, and gift presentations to the Awujale.



Drumming, cultural dances, and musical performances animate the event, while the streets of Ijebu Ode are transformed by colourful displays and banners from corporate sponsors eager to associate their brands with the prestige of Ojude Oba.

Beyond its cultural importance, Ojude Oba also has significant economic value. Hotels and guesthouses are usually fully booked, while local businesses and vendors see a surge in patronage. It’s a boost for tourism, hospitality, and even the media, as the festival draws extensive coverage each year.

With heightened security provided by Nigerian authorities, the 2024 edition of the festival once again promises a secure, festive atmosphere filled with elegance, heritage, and a strong sense of communal pride. As the celebration unfolds, both participants and onlookers are eager to witness yet another dazzling chapter in the legacy of Ojude Oba.

100 million people to attend Ojude Oba

New Daily Prime earlier reported that no fewer than 100 million people are expected to participate in the 2025 edition of the event.

The Coordinator of the Ojude Oba Festival Committee, Dr Fassy Yusuf, the festival was scheduled to be held on

Sunday, in Ijebu-Ode, in honour of the Awujale of Ijebuland.

He noted that the festival, which has been on for over 100 years, “is expected to draw Ijebu sons and daughters from across the world, along with tourists and dignitaries eager to witness the vibrant celebration of culture, fashion, and tradition at the Utoro Centre in Ijebu-Ode.”

While speaking during an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Abeokuta, he said the estimated 100 million participants include approximately 200,000 people expected to converge at the main pavilion and the surrounding Utoro Centre.

“Additionally, between two and three million attendees are expected across Ijebu towns and other parts of Ogun.

“Besides the physical turnout, millions more will be watching online through various live streaming platforms globally,” he added.

The coordinator of the festival promised participants coming of a safe celebration and security provisions, saying, “the Nigerian Police, NSCDC, DSS, the military, Amotekun Corps, and the Vigilante Group of Nigeria, among others, will be fully deployed to prevent any breach of security.”

Ooni backs Tinubu's forest guard reform

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye

The Ooni of Ife, Oba Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi, Ojaja II, has expressed strong support for President Bola Tinubu's proposed restructuring of the Forest Guard security framework. The Yoruba monarch made the endorsement during a courtesy visit to the President in Lagos on Sunday.

Following their closed-door meeting, Oba Ogunwusi spoke to journalists, explaining that his visit was twofold: to mark the Eid al-Fitr (Sallah) celebrations and to personally update the President on his recent diplomatic trip to Kazakhstan.

"I'm here to greet Mr. President for the Sallah break and also to appreciate all the great things he's doing for our dear country," the Ooni said. "I went to a country called Kazakhstan and came back with feedback. The good things he's doing are opening Nigeria up to many nations that now want to work with us."

The monarch highlighted the growing international recognition of Nigeria under Tinubu's leadership, particularly with respect to foreign investment and macroeconomic stability.

"In history, there is no arbitrage again. You bring dollars to Nigeria to do business, and you take it out; no dual exchange between the central bank and the parallel



market. The world is watching us as a nation," he remarked.

Oba Ogunwusi also emphasized the evolving role of traditional rulers in national development, calling on them to work collaboratively with government institutions and inspire hope among Nigerian youth.

"We traditional rulers should lead by example, work in tandem with the government, and give hope to our youth. This is another testimony of hope for Nigerian youth," he noted.

On security matters, the Ooni expressed optimism about the Tinubu administration's strategies, especially the initiative to strengthen the Forest Guard system across northern and southern

regions of the country.

"We're very happy with the Forest Guard structure and the new platform to bring in more police force to continue to comb the entire forest, both in the north and in the south," he said. "Once security is addressed, there will be a solid platform for investment to flow into Nigeria."

The Ooni reaffirmed his unwavering support for President Tinubu, describing him as "a bold president committed to a better Nigeria." He urged Nigerians to embrace a positive and unified outlook on the nation's future.

"It's about time for all of us in Nigeria to come together and look at Nigeria as a cup half full, not half empty," Oba Ogunwusi concluded.

2027: SERAP demands review of INEC REC nominations

By Friday Omosola

The Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) has called on President Bola Tinubu to urgently revisit the appointments of at least three individuals alleged to be members of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) as Resident Electoral Commissioners (RECs) of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

In a letter dated 7 June 2025 and signed by SERAP Deputy Director Kolawole Oluwadare, the organisation cited threats to the credibility of the 2027 general elections.

SERAP urged Tinubu to replace the controversial nominees with qualified Nigerians who possess unquestionable integrity and are not affiliated with any political party.

The letter followed growing public concern over the president's October 2023 nomination, subsequently confirmed by the Senate, of Messrs Etekamba Umoren (Akwa Ibom), Isah Shaka Ehimeakne (Edo), Bunmi Omosoyindemi (Lagos), and Anugbum Onuoha (Rivers) as INEC RECs.

SERAP warned that conducting the 2027 general elections under the supervision of electoral officials with perceived partisan affiliations would seriously undermine the credibility of the electoral process and erode public trust in Nigeria's democracy.

"Holding the 2027 general elections amid the appointment of partisan RECs will make a mockery of Nigerians' right to participate in free and fair elections and undermine public confidence in the electoral process," SERAP stated in the letter.

The organisation urged Tinubu to demonstrate respect for constitutional provisions and international democratic standards by immediately nominating independent, non-partisan individuals as replacements and forwarding their names to the Senate for confirmation in accordance with due process.

Additionally, SERAP called on the president to instruct the Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Lateef Fagbemi, to prepare and transmit a draft bill to the National Assembly aimed at strengthening the legal and operational independence of INEC before the next general elections.



"Sending a draft bill to the National Assembly well ahead of the 2027 general elections to improve the independence and impartiality of INEC would enhance the integrity and legitimacy of the elections, and address the serious and debilitating problems witnessed during the 2023 general elections," the letter read.

SERAP argued that the constitutional provisions governing the appointment of INEC officials make it clear that those entrusted with overseeing elections must be entirely independent and free from political bias.

It cited multiple sections of the 1999 Constitution (as amended), including Section 156(1), Paragraph 14 of the Third Schedule, and Section 6(4) of the Electoral Act 2022, which explicitly prohibit the appointment of political party members to such positions.

"The credibility and legitimacy of elections depend mostly on the independence and impartiality of those appointed to manage the process," SERAP noted.

"Without an independent and impartial INEC, the democratic rights of Nigerians would remain illusory."

The group also emphasised that the government had both legal and moral obligations to ensure the integrity of the electoral process, warning that failure to

reverse the appointments would contradict the president's oath of office and constitutional responsibilities.

"Your government has the constitutional responsibilities to ensure both the appearance and the actual independence and impartiality in the appointment of INEC top officials," the letter stated.

SERAP further referenced international best practices and Nigeria's treaty obligations under frameworks such as the United Nations Human Rights Committee and the African Union Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, which require member states to establish and maintain truly independent and impartial electoral bodies.

It added that public perception of INEC's independence is critical for ensuring broad public trust and political stability during electoral cycles.

"Where Nigerians have doubts about the independence of INEC, they are more likely to have less confidence in the electoral process, thereby undermining democracy," the organisation warned.

According to SERAP, treating INEC as a politically-controlled department rather than as an autonomous and constitutionally-guaranteed body is inconsistent with both domestic laws and global democratic standards.

Sanwo-Olu unveils new trains for Lagos Blue Line, promises improved urban mobility

By Friday Omosola



Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos State has unveiled three new train sets for the Lagos Rail Mass Transit (LRMT) Blue Line at the National Theatre Station, marking a significant boost to the state's public transportation capacity.

Mr Sanwo-Olu revealed this in a statement posted on his social media accounts on Sunday.

He said each train set comprises four cars, effectively doubling the passenger capacity of the Blue Line.

According to the governor, the new additions will help reduce wait times, accelerate journeys,

and improve the reliability of the rail system.

Mr Sanwo-Olu added that the goal is to reduce train intervals to just 10 minutes.

"I unveiled three new train sets for the LRMT Blue Line today, each with four cars. With this addition, we are doubling our current passenger capacity," Mr Sanwo-Olu stated.

"This will directly improve the commute for thousands of Lagosians."

The governor expressed gratitude to President Bola Tinubu and the Federal Government, FG,

acknowledging their support in the procurement and delivery of the trains.

Mr Sanwo-Olu also disclosed that more developments are expected before the end of the year, including the arrival of new trains for the Red Line, which will have twice the capacity of the Blue Line trains.

Additionally, he confirmed that construction on Phase 2 of the Blue Line—stretching from Mile 2 to Okokomaiko—is ongoing.

"We're building infrastructure and a better future for urban mobility in Lagos. And we're just getting started," he said.

Ojude Oba: Abiodun pledges to preserve Ijebu culture, build inclusivity

By Friday Omosola



Governor Dapo Abiodun of Ogun State has reaffirmed his commitment to preserving the cultural heritage of Ijebuland.

He described his participation in the 2025 Ojude Oba Festival as a heartfelt tribute to the traditions that define the Ijebu people.

In a statement posted on his social media platforms on Sunday, Mr Abiodun said his presence at the festival was more than ceremonial.

He called it a ‘respectful homage to our roots and a visible affirmation of our enduring commitment to the culture that defines us.’

The governor, who attended the

event adorned in full traditional regalia—an elegantly tailored agbádá, a matching fila, and coral beads, said every element of his attire was thoughtfully selected to honour the sacredness of the occasion, the Awujale, and the revered customs of Ijebuland.

“Our presence was never about showmanship; it was a declaration of identity—an expression of grace, tradition, and responsible leadership,” he stated.

Mr Abiodun paid homage to the Awujale of Ijebuland, His Royal Majesty Oba (Dr.) Sikiru Kayode Adetona, GCON, as well as the regberegbe age-grade groups, noting that he felt ‘the heartbeat of a culture that continues to inspire and unite generations.’

He expressed gratitude for the warmth shown by the people and pledged continued efforts to safeguard the region’s cultural legacy while working towards a more prosperous and inclusive in the state.

“We will continue to safeguard this vibrant heritage while building a prosperous and inclusive Ogun State that honours its past and embraces its future,” he affirmed.

The Ojude Oba Festival, an annual post-Eid celebration, draws thousands of indigenes and dignitaries to Ijebu-Ode, showcasing the rich cultural heritage of the Ijebu people.

Oyebanji gives roadside traders two weeks to vacate Ado-Ekiti streets

By Friday Omosola



Governor Biodun Oyebanji of Ekiti State has issued a two-week ultimatum to traders operating on unauthorised roadside spaces in Ado-Ekiti to vacate and relocate to the newly completed ultra-modern Agric Olope Market.

The directive, which affects traders at Bisi Market, Kings Market, and other strategic locations in the state capital, was announced during a meeting with market women at the Palace of the Ewi of Ado-Ekiti.

Mr Oyebanji stated that all affected traders must relocate to the new market on or before 23 June or face the full weight of the law.

He emphasised that the relocation is part of the state government's broader strategy to ensure order, safety, and modern urban development in Ado-Ekiti.

According to the governor, street trading poses significant health and safety risks and undermines efforts to transform the capital into a smart,

orderly city.

"The market was built to their specifications. We met with the traders and they told us what they needed – water, toilets, security, warehouses, parking space – and we delivered on those requests," Mr Oyebanji said.

"We prefer consultation to force. That's why we involved the Ewi and the Ewi-in-Council, and today's meeting was to reach a consensus. I'm glad the market women have agreed to relocate peacefully," he added.

The Agric Olope Market, described as state-of-the-art, includes amenities such as water supply, modern toilets, internal road networks, solar-powered lighting for night trading, warehouses, and security infrastructure.

The governor, while hopeful that traders would comply voluntarily, warned that any defaulter would face legal consequences.

"Street trading is neither safe nor profitable, and anyone who goes

against the agreement reached today will be dealt with according to the law," he said.

In her welcome address, the Commissioner for Trade, Industry, Investment and Cooperatives, Tayo Adeola, praised the governor's commitment to improving the welfare of traders.

She urged traders to begin collecting allocation forms for shops and spaces at the new market from next Tuesday, assuring that the process would be transparent and fair.

Also speaking at the event, the Ewi of Ado-Ekiti, Oba Adeyemo Adejugbe, called on traders to comply with the directive, describing the new market as well-equipped and conducive for business.

He commended Mr Oyebanji for realising the vision of Ado-Ekiti's founding fathers through infrastructural development.

NYSC announces 2025 Batch 'A' Stream II orientation schedule

By Gbenga Oluranti Olaleye



The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) has announced that the 2025 Batch 'A' Stream II orientation course will begin nationwide on Wednesday, June 11, 2025, at all NYSC camps.

Registration for prospective corps members opens on June 11 and closes at midnight on Friday, June 13. The official swearing-in ceremony is scheduled for June 13, with the orientation programme ending on Tuesday, July 1.

All corps members are required to report to the camps specified in their call-up letters. Graduates trained outside Nigeria must present their international passports alongside original documents previously uploaded.

Mandatory documents for registration include the original call-

up letter, degree certificate or statement of result, valid school ID, and a certificate of medical fitness issued by a government or military hospital and stamped by the Nigeria Medical Association.

Graduates in regulated professions must provide proof of registration with their professional bodies. Polytechnic and monotechnic graduates are also required to present their National Diploma certificates.

The NYSC warned that presenting fake credentials will result in arrest, prosecution, and disqualification from the programme.

Corps members who lose their call-up letters must obtain a police report and sworn affidavit. Those who received letters from their institutions should return for reissuance, while those who printed

theirs online can reprint from the NYSC portal.

Special arrangements allow married, pregnant, and nursing mothers posted to states different from their husbands' residence to report to camps in their current state, provided they submit proof of marriage and the husband's residence.

Due to security concerns, corps members are advised to use only transportation companies operating from government-approved motor parks. Night travel is discouraged; corps members traveling late should spend the night in military barracks, police stations, NYSC secretariats, or corps lodges nearby.

The NYSC Act mandates legal consequences for those who refuse to report or attempt to participate illegally in the scheme.

Lagos, GIZ SKYE strengthen ties on skills development for youth

By Friday Omosola



The Lagos State Government has welcomed fresh efforts by the GIZ SKYE (Skills Development for Youth Employment) project to deepen collaboration aimed at equipping young people with relevant skills and expanding employment opportunities.

The Commissioner for Wealth Creation and Employment, Akinyemi Bankole Ajigbotafe, received a delegation from GIZ SKYE on a courtesy visit to the Ministry's conference room in Alausa.

The Commissioner was represented by the Permanent Secretary, Wasiu Olayinka.

The visiting team, led by Djokic Svjetlana, Component Manager for Employment Promotion, reiterated the organisation's commitment to working more closely with the state to

advance youth development goals.

In his remarks, the Permanent Secretary commended GIZ SKYE for its sustained support, emphasising the importance of aligning development initiatives with the THEMES Plus agenda of the current administration.

He noted that the ministry is committed to promoting job creation and youth empowerment through strategic partnerships.

"It is heartening to see development partners like GIZ SKYE working in tandem with the Lagos State Government to equip our young people with the skills and opportunities they need to thrive in today's economy," Olayinka stated.

"We deeply appreciate this collaboration and are optimistic that it will continue to yield positive outcomes."

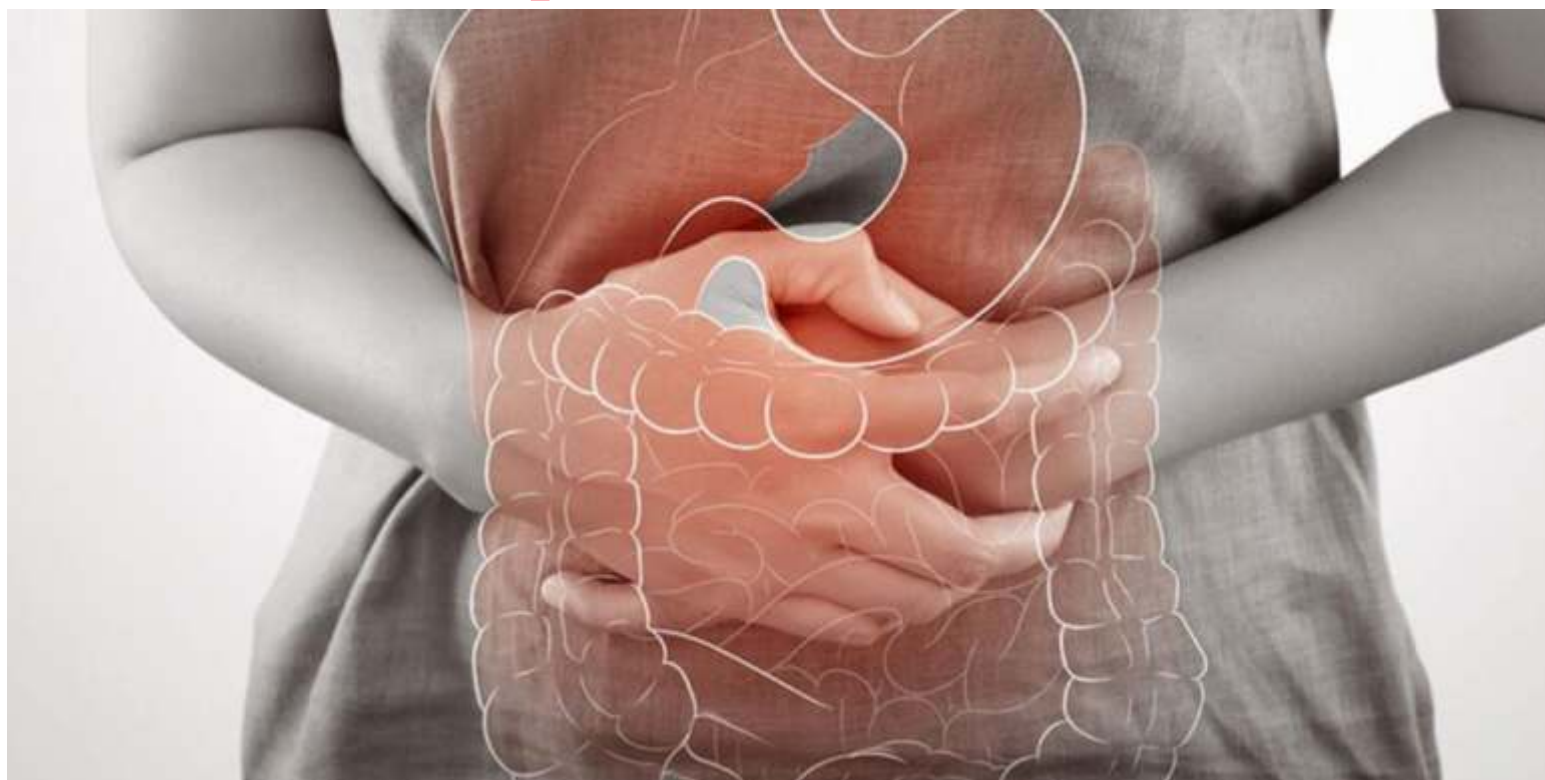
Speaking during the visit, Ms Svjetlana thanked the state government for its continued partnership and support. She reaffirmed GIZ SKYE's dedication to fostering inclusive and sustainable employment through skills development and demand-driven training programmes.

"We are here today to reaffirm our readiness to work more closely with the Ministry and other stakeholders to ensure that more young people in Lagos have access to demand-driven training, decent jobs, and sustainable livelihoods," she said.

The meeting also provided a platform to explore existing initiatives and identify new areas of cooperation aimed at reducing unemployment and improving socio-economic outcomes for Lagos youth.

Rising IBD cases tied to urban life, diet, common medications – Experts

By **Helen Okechukwu**



Cases of Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) are on the rise, and doctors say it's more than just a matter of lifestyle choices like alcohol use.

IBD, which includes Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis, is a chronic condition that causes inflammation in the digestive tract, leading to severe discomfort, diarrhoea, cramps, weight loss and poor quality of life.

Though most commonly diagnosed in adults over 30, it can develop at any age.

Experts have identified several factors contributing to this troubling trend. A family history of IBD remains one of the strongest risk factors. Around one in five people with IBD have a close relative with the condition.

A study examining over 13,000 individuals between 1991 and 2003 found an increased risk of IBD following infections with

Campylobacter and Salmonella.

Researchers have now identified over 200 genetic variations that may affect how the body's immune system reacts to gut bacteria or how well the gut lining defends itself. However, genes alone don't tell the full story.

Medications such as antibiotics also come under scrutiny. While useful in fighting infections, antibiotics can damage the gut's natural defences by wiping out helpful bacteria and thinning the protective mucus layer. This makes the gut lining more prone to inflammation. Similarly, drugs like ibuprofen and other NSAIDs are known to worsen IBD symptoms.

Environmental factors are just as important. A Spanish study has shown that people living in cities are more likely to develop IBD than those in rural settings.

Experts believe the more sterile lifestyle in urban areas reduces children's exposure to microbes that

train the immune system. Combined with smoking, stress, and poor sleep, modern city life creates a perfect storm for gut issues.

Diet plays a key role. A Western diet high in fat, sugar, and processed foods is known to upset the balance of gut bacteria. In contrast, a diet rich in fibre seems to offer some protection.

Foods like burgers, sweets, and fried snacks can worsen inflammation, especially during flare-ups. Doctors also advise limiting caffeine, alcohol, and salty foods, as these may trigger symptoms in some people.

IBD remains a lifelong condition. While IBD remains a lifelong condition, experts say managing your diet, avoiding unnecessary antibiotics, and leading a balanced lifestyle can reduce the risk. If you notice signs like frequent stomach pain, diarrhoea, or unexplained weight loss, it's important to seek medical advice promptly.

Signs you should know when your body needs water

By Helen Okechukwu

Is your body asking for water without you noticing? Think back—When was the last time you drank a proper glass of water? Despite knowing hydration is key to good health, many people in Britain, United Kingdom (UK), still don't drink enough throughout the day.

Recent research from PureGym reveals that most Britons consume well below the advised six to eight glasses daily. This silent habit not only leaves us feeling low on energy but can gradually lead to dehydration-related health complications if left unchecked.

Water is fundamental to nearly every process in the human body. Also known as (H₂O) is a vital inorganic compound that exists naturally in liquid, solid (ice), and gaseous (steam) states. It's a transparent, tasteless, and odourless substance that forms the Earth's hydrosphere, including oceans, lakes, rivers, and rain. Water is also a major constituent of living organisms.

Water consumption helps regulate temperature, supports organ function, removes waste, and cushions your joints. Without enough fluids, even basic functions can falter, leading to both short-term discomfort and long-term health risks.

Experts warn that most of us may be operating in a state of mild dehydration without even realising it. Stavros Kavouras, a leading hydration researcher at Arizona State University, explains that inadequate fluid intake is linked to chronic diseases such as high blood pressure, diabetes, and cognitive decline.

As the body loses around 2 to 2.5 litres of water daily through normal activities like breathing, urination, and sweating, replacing these fluids is essential. The need becomes even more urgent in hot weather or during illness, especially in older adults who are more vulnerable to the effects of dehydration.

Here are six signs your body is telling you to drink more water:

1. Feeling thirsty



Thirst is your body's first red flag. If you feel parched, you're already slightly dehydrated. Losing even a small percentage of body weight in fluids can trigger thirst, particularly in warm environments or during physical activity. Drinking water quickly restores balance and makes you feel better.

2. Darker urine

Your urine is a reliable hydration indicator. Pale yellow is ideal; if it's a dark amber or brown, it's time to rehydrate. When fluid levels drop, your body conserves water by concentrating urine, putting extra strain on the kidneys and raising the risk of infections or kidney stones.

3. Brain fog or trouble concentrating

Because the brain is mostly water, even mild dehydration can affect memory, focus, and coordination. Research shows that professionals like doctors and nurses who don't hydrate properly during shifts experience measurable cognitive decline—something that can be reversed by simply drinking a glass of water.

4. Headaches

Dehydration can cause or worsen headaches by reducing fluid around the brain, increasing pressure and triggering

pain receptors. If a headache improves with fluids and rest, dehydration may be the culprit. Staying hydrated is also important in managing migraines, as it may reduce their intensity and frequency.

5. Fatigue and low energy

If you're feeling constantly drained, dehydration could be playing a role. Water is essential for maintaining blood circulation and oxygen delivery. Without enough of it, your heart must work harder, leading to feelings of exhaustion, especially in hot weather or after physical exertion.

6. Dizziness or fainting spells

In more severe cases, dehydration can cause your blood pressure to drop, making you feel lightheaded or even causing fainting. This happens when fluid loss interferes with the body's ability to regulate temperature and blood flow. At this stage, oral rehydration salts or even medical intervention may be necessary.

The bottom line? Don't wait until you're gasping for water to hydrate. Make it a habit to sip fluids regularly, especially in warm weather or during illness. And remember: your body is about 60% water—for everything to run smoothly, it needs regular top-ups.

NDLEA seizes cannabis hidden as tea, arrests suspects nationwide

By Helen Okechukwu

Operatives of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) have intercepted a shipment containing 66 parcels of Loud, a potent strain of cannabis, at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport (MMIA) in Ikeja, Lagos.

According to the Director, Media & Advocacy, Femi Babafemi, on Sunday, noted that the interception, which took place on Thursday, followed credible intelligence received ahead of the shipment's arrival at the airport's cargo section on 11 May.

The NDLEA placed the consignment under surveillance for over three weeks before carrying out a joint inspection with other relevant stakeholders.

The illegal drug, weighing 62.20 kilograms, was concealed in packages labelled as green tea and had arrived from Thailand via the United Arab Emirates on an Emirates Airlines flight.

In a separate operation on Monday, 2nd June, NDLEA officers seized 1,665 kilograms of skunk, another strain of cannabis, along the Lekki-Ajah Expressway in Lagos. Two suspects, Gidado Ayinde and Obanla Oluwafemi, were arrested at the scene.

In Kaduna State, on 3 June, NDLEA operatives arrested 29-year-old Goodluck Nnaemeka along the Abuja-Kaduna Expressway. He was found in possession of 612 bottles of codeine-based syrup and 2,970 tablets of flunitrazepam.

That same day, a 52-year-old suspect, Kabiru Musa (also known as KB), was apprehended at Kurmin Mashi. Before his arrest, 25.7 kilograms of skunk had been recovered from his hideout.

In Edo State, NDLEA personnel discovered 9 kilograms of Loud hidden in the spare tyre compartment of an Audi station wagon with registration number AAA975 XU.

The driver, 45-year-old Atari Israel,



was arrested along Auchu Road. On the same day, two women, Favour Joy and Joy Igwe, were arrested in the Ikpoba Hill area of Benin City. Recovered from them were 106.57 kilograms of skunk, 1 kilogram of Loud, 800 grams of Colorado, and 302 grams of methamphetamine.

Alongside enforcement operations, the NDLEA continued its anti-drug advocacy under the War Against Drug Abuse (WADA) initiative. Sensitisation campaigns were conducted in schools across several states, including Katsina, Ebonyi, Cross River, Lagos, and Anambra.

Additionally, the agency's Zone 13 Command paid a courtesy visit to the traditional ruler of Nembe Kingdom in Bayelsa State to promote drug abuse awareness.

NDLEA Chairman and Chief Executive, Brig. Gen. Mohamed Marwa (Retd), commended officers in Lagos, Kaduna, Edo, and other parts of the country for their efforts. He praised their balanced approach in tackling both drug supply and demand.

Recall that the agency earlier dismantled a criminal syndicate involved in trafficking cocaine to Saudi Arabia under the guise of sponsoring pilgrims for the Hajj.

Babafemi said the agency arrested three major suspects, Abubakar Muhammad, Abdulhakeem Muhammed Tijjani, and Muhammad Aji Shugaba, on May 27 and 28.

Their arrest followed the earlier apprehension of two intending pilgrims at the Mallam Aminu Kano International Airport (MAKIA), who were caught attempting to smuggle cocaine.

The two pilgrims, identified as Ibrahim Umar Mustapha and Muhammad Siraj Shifado, were intercepted on Monday, May 26, while trying to board Ethiopian Airlines flight ET 940 en route to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Acting on credible intelligence, NDLEA officials subjected them to body scans, which revealed they had ingested illegal drugs.

Cardiologist reveals 10 daily habits for healthy heart

By **Helen Okechukwu**



A leading cardiologist with more than 20 years of medical experience has outlined ten simple daily habits that could help protect your heart, and none require a strict diet or expensive prescriptions.

Dr Sanjay Bhojraj believes cardiac health starts with your daily routine.

“It is not just about what’s on your plate; it is about what you do from the moment you wake up,” he explains.

Here are his top heart-friendly habits you can begin today.

1. Aim for 7k–10k steps every day
Regular walking helps regulate blood pressure and improve blood sugar levels. No need for intense workouts — just keep moving.

2. Choose a high-protein breakfast
Getting 25–30g of protein in the morning helps control appetite and

maintain lean muscle. Think eggs, yoghurt or a protein smoothie.

3. Add magnesium and K2 to your routine

These nutrients support heart rhythm and keep calcium out of arteries. Many people lack them without realising.

4. Hold off on screens after waking

Checking your phone right after waking can spike stress hormones. Give yourself 30–60 minutes screen-free to start calmly.

5. Step into the morning sun

Natural light early in the day helps regulate your sleep and hormone cycles, both important for heart function.

Read Also: Hidden heart risk: hearing loss linked to heart failure, study warns

6. Hydrate before caffeine

Drink water before coffee to restore overnight hydration and avoid blood

pressure spikes or jittery feelings.

7. Limit highly processed snacks

Most packaged snacks contain unhealthy oils and sugars that damage arteries over time. Fewer ingredients usually mean better choices.

8. Track blood pressure and HRV weekly

Monitor your blood pressure regularly. Also, consider checking your heart rate variability (HRV)— a good indicator of stress and recovery.

9. Practice nasal breathing on walks

Breathing through your nose while walking helps your body produce nitric oxide, which supports relaxed blood vessels.

10. Stay consistent with small changes
Heart health builds over time. These small, daily actions add up to a longer, healthier life.

'I wait all year for this': Why Nigerians abroad flock home for Ojude Oba

By **Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi**

Despite the rising cost of living around the world, many Nigerians — especially Ijebu indigenes — from Europe, America, and other parts of Africa attended this year's Ojude Oba festival, held at the Awujale Pavilion in Ijebu Ode.

They arrived dressed in bright lace, colourful aso-oke, and stylish designer shoes, gathering to pay tribute to their king. For many in the Nigerian diaspora, Ojude Oba is more than a festival — it is a living, breathing link to home, a cherished reunion with friends and family, and a joyful declaration that no matter where life has taken them, this one weekend in Ijebu Ode belongs to tradition. It is an identity many proudly embrace.

"I wait all year for this," says Dr. Demaji Adeoja, a 50-year-old secondary school teacher based in Manchester. "I've attended seven years in a row. Even though things are expensive, I have spent no less than £3,000 for this year's event — but the money is worth it. There's nothing like that feeling when you hear the drums, smell the festival food, and see thousands of us gathering under the sun. You remember who you are."

"I grew up in Ijebu Ode and now live in London," says Mr. Sola Banjo, a chartered accountant. "Every year, I return for Ojude Oba — this time with my children. It's their first experience of the festival, and it has helped them connect with our culture. They now understand the significance of wearing the agbada, and they are proud of their Nigerian roots — despite being born British citizens."

For many diaspora Nigerians — particularly those of Ijebu heritage — Ojude Oba offers an unparalleled sense of cultural rootedness.

The History of Ojude Oba

The origins of the Ojude Oba Festival



date back to the late 19th century, when Ijebu Muslims first began visiting the Awujale — the king of the Ijebu people — to offer prayers and show loyalty during Eid al-Adha. What began as a modest royal court visit has since evolved into one of Nigeria's most colourful and enduring cultural celebrations.

"Our ancestors began this tradition as an act of unity and respect," says Chief Adekunle Odubote, a senior festival organiser. "Today, it stands as a powerful symbol of Ijebu resilience and our shared cultural identity."

Across decades of political change, economic transformation, and global crises — including military rule and the COVID-19 pandemic — the festival has remained a cultural constant. Its survival is a testament to the enduring spirit of the Ijebu people.

Corporate partnerships have also helped shape the modern festival. Globacom, for example, has supported the event for over two decades. "Our relationship with Ojude Oba is more than sponsorship," a Globacom spokesperson says. "It is a cultural covenant — a vibrant alliance between innovation and tradition."

As the festival continues to grow, organisers hope it will deliver lasting economic impact. "Ojude Oba is here to stay," says Chief Odubote. "We see it as a legacy event that can transform the economy of Ijebu Ode and, ultimately, all of Ogun State."

Diaspora Pride and Power

The diaspora's role in elevating the festival's profile cannot be overstated. Social media is flooded each year with images of Nigerians from London, Toronto, Atlanta, and Johannesburg, draped in exquisite Yoruba attire — often captioned #OjudeOba.

"The diaspora community amplifies the festival," says Bimbo Olayemi, a social media blogger from Birmingham. "Through their posts, videos, and networks, they globalise Yoruba identity. They remind younger Nigerians abroad that our culture is not static — it evolves and thrives."

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on next page**

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In London, the impact is visible both online and offline. “We’ve also seen how people are now gathering in Peckham, London, to celebrate Ojude Oba,” Olayemi adds. “Many Nigerians living abroad are proud of their heritage — and they are bringing the spirit of the festival to new audiences.”

For younger diaspora members, Ojude Oba serves as an anchor. “We grew up with stories about it,” says Adeola Adedayo, a 21-year-old student who travelled from New York to attend this year’s event. “Seeing it in person, participating — it’s life-changing. You stop feeling like an outsider to your own culture.”

Many age-grade groups and clubs also turn out in full style for the celebration. Each group joins the grand parade in coordinated outfits, performing traditional dances and chants, all vying for the Awujale’s admiration.

“When our group walks onto the field, the energy is electric,” says Mrs. Kemi Adegbite, 49, an Ijebu-born British Nigerian entrepreneur. “You see friends you haven’t met in 20 years. You greet the king. You remember your ancestors.”

The festival culminates in a grand parade before the Awujale, who watches from an elevated throne, flanked by chiefs and dignitaries.

“Our diaspora are a treasure,” one Ijebu indigene identified as Sowunmi tells New Daily Prime. “They bring not only resources but also renewed pride in our culture. They help us project Yoruba identity to the world.”

This royal welcome adds to the festival’s deep emotional significance.

“It means everything to walk before the king,” says Mrs. Adegbite. “You feel connected to centuries of history.”

Economics of a Cultural Homecoming
Ojude Oba is not just a cultural spectacle — it is a major economic boon for Ijebu Ode and the surrounding communities.

According to local estimates, diaspora attendees inject millions of naira into the local economy each year. Hotels are fully booked months in advance. Tailors work overtime for weeks leading up to the festival. Street vendors enjoy some of their best sales of the year.

“I do most of my annual business during Ojude Oba,” says Alhaja Sidikatu Ogunbanjo, 63, a food vendor who has worked the festival for four decades. “The diaspora spend well — they want to support local people.” The ripple effect extends across multiple sectors of the local economy:

- The demand for traditional attire — such as Aso-Oke and Ori Ade caps —

surges in the weeks before the festival.

- Food vendors and caterers experience significantly increased patronage.
- Artisans and performers find an important platform to showcase and monetise their crafts.

Challenges and Cautions

Travelling to Nigeria is not without its challenges. Some diaspora attendees cite concerns about security, flight costs, and logistics.

“Sometimes the roads are tough, and accommodation can be tricky,” admits Mrs. Ayinde. “But it’s worth it. You feel alive there in a way no London Nigerian party can match.”

Others remain more cautious.

“I love Ojude Oba, but this year I stayed away because of security concerns, poor road conditions, and the overall stress of the journey,” says Mr. Ayo Adebayo, a diaspora Nigerian based in New York. “We need better infrastructure to make it easier for those abroad to return. When I came back last year, I spent more than a week in hospital treating an infection.”

Despite these challenges, this year’s festival has been a source of inspiration for many in the diaspora — and is encouraging even more to plan their return for next year’s event.



Nollywood needs structural reform, Omotola Jalade-Ekeinde

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Veteran Nigerian actress and producer, Omotola Jalade-Ekeinde, has called for urgent structural reforms in Nollywood.

With over three decades of experience in the film industry, Omotola made this passionate appeal through a viral Instagram post on Saturday, June 7.

The actress, widely respected for her roles in more than 300 films, compared her experiences working in Nigeria's Nollywood with her brief time in Hollywood. She highlighted one major difference: the issue of residual payments, or royalties.

Hollywood pays royalties, Nollywood doesn't

Omotola expressed her concern about how Nigerian actors are often left without long-term financial rewards for their work. According to her, Hollywood's payment structure ensures that actors continue to earn from their past projects, long after filming ends. This system is known as residual payments.

To illustrate, she revealed that she has been receiving monthly residual payments in the United States. These payments come from just two short-term projects she worked on during her four years in Hollywood.

"Just four years in Hollywood. Two test projects. Monthly residuals," she wrote.

She posted a photo of an envelope from SAG-AFTRA, the American union that protects the rights of film and media professionals. The envelope contained her latest payment statement, showing that Hollywood continues to reward her work even after production ended.

Nollywood's lack of structure hurts actors

In contrast, Omotola expressed deep disappointment over the lack of such a system in Nigeria. Despite acting in over 310 Nollywood productions throughout her 30-year career, she said she has never received any form of residual income.

"30 years in Nollywood, with over 310 projects, no residuals," she noted in her post. She added hashtags like #NollywoodNeedsStructure and #UnlearnToRelearn to emphasize the



urgency of reform and the need for a mindset shift within the industry.

Omotola's remarks have sparked discussions across social media, with many Nigerians expressing support and frustration over the poor welfare of creatives in Nollywood.

Why residuals matter

Residual payments, also known as royalties, are a crucial part of the entertainment business in many developed countries. They ensure that actors, directors, and writers are paid whenever their work is rebroadcast, streamed, or sold.

In Hollywood, residuals are backed by strong labor unions like SAG-AFTRA. These unions negotiate contracts that protect artists and ensure they benefit financially over time.

In Nollywood, however, there is no such system in place. Once an actor is paid for a role, that is usually the end of their earnings from that project. Even if the movie becomes a hit and generates millions in revenue, the actors receive nothing more.

A wake-up call for Nollywood

Omotola's post is a clear call for change. Her message is not just about money. It is about building an industry that values and respects its professionals. An industry where hard work is rewarded beyond the initial payment.

She believes that for Nollywood to grow and compete globally, it must adopt international best practices. That includes setting up structures for fair compensation, legal protection, and sustainable income for creatives.

"It's time to unlearn bad habits and relearn better ways," she suggested.

Moving forward: What Nollywood can do

Her post has once again opened the door to a broader conversation about reform in the Nigerian film industry. Experts believe that Nollywood can move forward by forming stronger guilds and unions. These bodies would represent the interests of actors and ensure better working conditions.

Also, there is a growing call for proper contracts and transparent financial systems within the industry. Filmmakers, producers, and distributors must begin to see actors not just as performers, but as key stakeholders in the success of a movie.

Final thoughts

Omotola Jalade-Ekeinde's call is timely and necessary. With more Nigerian movies gaining international attention, the industry must evolve. Protecting artists' rights and ensuring fair compensation is a big part of that journey.

As Omotola's words continue to trend online, many hope her voice will be the spark that finally drives lasting change in Nollywood.

Singer Darey Art Alade, wife survive accident on Third Mainland Bridge

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian R&B star Darey Art Alade lost his car to a sudden fire on Friday, June 6, in Lagos State.

The incident happened around 4 p.m. on the Third Mainland Bridge, one of the busiest roads in the city.

The car, which was being driven by a staff member, caught fire without warning. According to initial reports, the vehicle burned completely before help could arrive. However, no one was harmed in the incident.

Darey Art Alade's wife shares the news online

Deola Art Alade, Darey's wife, broke the news to fans and followers through her Instagram page on Saturday. She posted a heartfelt message, revealing that the accident was both shocking and emotional for their family.

In her statement, Deola confirmed that everyone involved was safe. "It was a shocking experience," she wrote. "But we are grateful that the driver was safe, and that is what truly matters."

She also shared photos of the burnt car and thanked God for preserving life. "No lives were lost," she added, highlighting that safety is more important than any material possession.

A couple reflects on the scary experience

The couple later released a joint statement to express their thoughts about the event. They emphasised the value of life over material things and expressed deep gratitude for the safety of the people involved.

"Yesterday, our car caught fire around 4 p.m. on the Third Mainland Bridge and burned to the ground," they wrote. "It was a shocking experience, but we are grateful that the driver was safe. That is what truly matters."

They continued: "This reminds us how unimportant material things become



when life is at stake. Cars and other possessions can always be replaced, but life is irreplaceable."

Fans and friends offer support

Following the announcement, fans, friends, and fellow celebrities flooded the couple's social media pages with messages of support. Many thanked God for the safety of the singer and his family.

Some fans noted how quickly things can change and used the moment to urge others to stay careful and alert on the road. Others praised the couple for handling the situation with calm and grace.

No cause confirmed yet

As of the time of reporting, no official cause for the fire has been announced. It is unclear whether the fire resulted from a mechanical fault, an electrical issue, or overheating.

However, the incident has sparked conversations about car safety in Nigeria. Many people online are urging drivers to regularly service their vehicles and keep fire extinguishers on board in case of emergencies.

Darey keeps focus on what matters

Darey Art Alade, who has been a major figure in Nigeria's music scene for years, has not made a detailed personal comment yet. However, his wife's posts show the family's focus remains on their well-being rather than the loss of the car.

The singer, known for hits like Not the Girl and Pray for Me, has always kept a strong family presence in the public eye. His fans appreciate the way he and his wife support each other, even in tough times like this.

A lesson in gratitude

While the experience was frightening, the couple is using it as a moment to reflect and show gratitude. Their message is clear: life is precious, and we must value it above all else.

"This has reminded us of what truly matters," Deola said. "We are thankful for safety, and we hold on to that more than anything."

As investigations continue and the couple moves forward, fans continue to send love and prayers their way.

Charles Okocha thankful after friend survives collapsed POP ceiling

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nollywood actor Charles Okocha has asked fans and well-wishers to pray for his friend, Rico, popularly known on social media as “Billionaire Gateman.”

This comes after a terrifying incident in which the ceiling collapsed on Rico.

According to reports, the plaster of Paris (POP) ceiling in Rico’s home gave way without warning, falling directly on him. The heavy material pinned him to the ground. The incident shocked everyone who saw it happen or heard about it.

A close call

Rico was home when the ceiling suddenly came crashing down. It was a freak accident that could have easily ended in tragedy. He was immediately rushed to the hospital after being pulled out from under the debris.

Fortunately, he survived the incident and is currently receiving medical attention. The extent of his injuries has not been fully disclosed, but sources say he is conscious and recovering.

Charles Okocha reacts on Instagram

Charles Okocha, known for his roles in comic and dramatic films, reacted quickly after hearing the news. He took to Instagram to share what had happened and to thank God for Rico’s life.

He posted a video showing Rico being helped after the accident. In the caption, he wrote:

“Prayers up for my boy Rico #billionaire_gateman_ POP just fell on him. To God be the glory.”

The actor’s message was filled with emotion. He urged his followers to pray for Rico’s full recovery.

Support from fans and celebrities

Following the post, fans and fellow celebrities flooded the comment section with well-wishes. Many expressed shock



at the news, while others thanked God for sparing Rico’s life.

Messages like “Thank God for his life,” “Speedy recovery, bro,” and “We are praying for him” poured in. Some fans also shared similar experiences of POP ceiling failures, warning others to be cautious.

What is POP, and why does it collapse?

POP, or plaster of Paris, is a common material used in ceiling and wall finishing. It gives a smooth, stylish look, which is why it is so popular in modern Nigerian homes.

However, experts warn that poor installation or lack of maintenance can cause POP ceilings to fail. If not properly secured or if moisture weakens the structure, it can come loose and fall. This can lead to injuries or even death.

A wake-up call for homeowners

Rico’s experience is a reminder that home safety should never be taken lightly. Structural checks, especially for ceiling work, should be done regularly. Hiring qualified workers and using strong materials can help avoid such dangers.

Many online users who saw the video of the incident are now calling for more

awareness about home safety. Some suggested that building inspectors should carry out surprise visits to ensure the safety of homes, especially in new or renovated buildings.

Rico’s online popularity

Rico, aka “Billionaire Gateman,” became popular on Instagram for his humorous content. He often plays the role of a gateman with a rich taste and funny personality. His skits have earned him a loyal fan base.

Many of his followers see him as a rising star in online comedy. His sudden accident shocked fans who were used to seeing him in good spirits.

Hope for a full recovery

As of now, Rico is still under medical care. Charles Okocha and many others are praying and hoping for a quick and complete recovery.

“Life is fragile,” one fan commented. “This shows how fast things can change. We are glad he’s alive.”

Charles Okocha has not given further updates, but he continues to thank God for sparing his friend’s life. Fans are also waiting to hear from Rico himself once he feels better.

Actress Aisha Lawal denies car gift from MC Oluomo, discloses source of wealth

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Popular Nigerian actress and entrepreneur, Aisha Lawal, has addressed recent rumors about her source of wealth.

She also spoke out on allegations that she received a car gift from Musiliu Akinsanya, also known as MC Oluomo, the national chairman of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW).

The actress made her comments during an interview on the show Talk to B, where she firmly denied the claims and explained how she built her fortune.

Viral video sparks controversy

The controversy began after a video went viral on social media. In the clip, a man identified as Baba Bistijabah, one of the NURTW leaders, accused MC Oluomo of gifting Aisha Lawal a Toyota Venza. According to him, he was the original owner of the car, which he claimed MC Oluomo took from him and gave to the actress.

The video quickly gained attention online. Social media users began to speculate about the nature of Lawal's relationship with the union boss. The rumor prompted many to question how the actress acquired her wealth and lifestyle.

"I've never driven a venza", Lawal responds
In her interview, the actress dismissed the accusation outright. She said she has never owned or driven a Venza in her life.

"I don't even like the car," she said. "It's not my style. I drive a Lexus GX 460."

She questioned the motives behind the claim and expressed shock at how quickly false information spread.

"I wonder if this is a setup or if the man was under the influence," she said. "How can he say MC Oluomo collected a Venza and gave it to me?"

"Put some respect on my name"

Aishat used the opportunity to set the



record straight. She emphasized that her wealth did not come from any handouts or political favors. Instead, she revealed that she made a major financial breakthrough during the COVID-19 lockdown.

"COVID-19 was a turning point for me," she said. "I made ₦10 million in just one week during the lockdown."

Though she didn't go into full detail about how she earned the money, Lawal noted that her hard work and business efforts paid off during that period.

"I've worked hard to be where I am," she said. "People need to put some respect on my name. I didn't get to this point by luck or favors. I suffered and worked for my money."

"I respect MC Oluomo, but..."

While denying the car gift rumor, the actress made it clear that she respects MC Oluomo. She acknowledged his contributions to people in the entertainment industry and others she personally knows.

"I have respect for MC Oluomo because he has helped people I know," she said. "But I never received any car or favor from him."

She stated that the claims were not only false but insulting to her as a woman who

has built her brand through years of effort.

Social media reacts

The viral video and Lawal's response have continued to spark mixed reactions online. While some fans have praised her for speaking up and defending her name, others have called for more transparency from celebrities regarding their wealth and lifestyle.

Still, many online users have shown support for the actress, applauding her for her honesty and resilience.

A reminder of the pressures on in the spotlight

Aisha Lawal's case reflects a broader issue in Nigeria's entertainment scene, where successful women often face scrutiny and suspicion about their earnings.

For Lawal, the recent events were more than just a rumour, they were an attack on her integrity. But by responding directly and clearly, she has managed to take control of the narrative.

Whether or not her words will silence critics remains to be seen. But one thing is clear: Aisha Lawal wants the public to know that her success didn't come from shortcuts, but from sweat and sacrifice.

Your melody lives forever, Brain Jotter pays tribute to Mike Ejeagha

By Ifedamola Joseph Fayomi

Nigerian skit maker and comedian, Brain Jotter, has expressed deep sorrow over the death of highlife music legend, Mike ‘Gentleman’ Ejeagha.

Ejeagha, a respected figure in Nigeria’s music history, passed away on Friday night after a long battle with prostate cancer. He was best known for his unique storytelling style and his popular 1983 hit song, Gwo Gwo Gwo Ngwo.

News of his death broke on Saturday and was confirmed by multiple media outlets, including New Daily Prime. Fans, celebrities, and cultural lovers across the country have since paid tribute to the late musician.

“His melody lives forever”

Reacting to the news, Brain Jotter shared an emotional post on Instagram. The skit maker posted a short video clip from his visit to Ejeagha in Enugu last year. The video showed the moment he met the music icon and paid his respects.

Alongside the video, Brain Jotter wrote, “39 years ago, he made magic — Gwo Gwo Gwo Ngwo. 39 years later, we danced to it again. Now, he rests, but his melody lives forever. Rest in peace, legend.”

The heartfelt message quickly gained attention online. Fans flooded the comment section with words of sympathy and praise for both Brain Jotter and the late musician.

A song that found new life

Although Gwo Gwo Gwo Ngwo was originally released in 1983, the song gained fresh popularity in 2024 when Brain Jotter used it in a viral dance challenge.

The challenge went viral on social media. On Instagram, it racked up over 29.1 million views and more than 30,000 comments. On TikTok, it gathered an additional 19.6 million views.



The sudden rise in attention introduced Ejeagha’s music to a younger generation. Many Nigerians, both old and young, rediscovered the charm of his sound and lyrical storytelling.

A surprise visit and generous gift

Following the success of the dance challenge, Brain Jotter decided to show his appreciation. In 2024, he travelled to Enugu to meet the music legend in person.

During the visit, the comedian surprised Ejeagha with a N2 million cash gift. He explained that the money was a token of appreciation for the joy and inspiration the music had brought to millions of fans.

Photos and videos from the visit showed a joyful and emotional exchange between the two artists. Ejeagha, who was already in fragile health at the time, appeared visibly moved by the gesture.

A life of music and wisdom

Mike Ejeagha was born in 1932 and spent more than six decades in the music industry. He was known not only for his songs but also for the wisdom they conveyed. Singing mostly in Igbo, Ejeagha’s lyrics often contained proverbs, moral lessons, and cultural tales passed down through generations.

Many of his songs became popular in the southeastern part of Nigeria, where he was affectionately known as “Gentleman.” His use of traditional

instruments and his slow, clear vocal style made his music stand out.

Ejeagha’s contributions to Igbo highlife music helped preserve the language and culture through difficult times in Nigeria’s history. He became more than just a musician, he was a cultural custodian.

A legacy that endures

Though Mike Ejeagha has passed on, his work continues to speak. His songs remain available on various platforms, and many fans still turn to his music for comfort, wisdom, and joy.

Artists like Brain Jotter have helped revive and celebrate his legacy. By bringing old songs back into the spotlight, they remind the world that true art does not fade.

As fans continue to mourn, many are calling for national recognition of Ejeagha’s life and contributions to Nigerian music and culture. Some have even suggested renaming cultural centers or creating music archives in his honour.

For now, though, the focus remains on remembering a man who made music with meaning. A man whose voice told stories, taught lessons, and touched hearts.

Mike ‘Gentleman’ Ejeagha may be gone, but his melody, indeed, lives on.

Trump sends national guard to Los Angeles following immigration raid protests

By Fatimah Idera

President Donald Trump's administration announced the deployment of 2,000 National Guard troops to Los Angeles on Saturday, following escalating tensions between federal agents and demonstrators protesting immigration raids.

Clashes broke out in the city's Paramount neighbourhood, where federal agents faced off with hundreds of protesters and some waving Mexican flags during the second consecutive day of demonstrations.

Later Saturday evening, a smaller protest of around 60 people gathered in downtown Los Angeles, chanting slogans such as "ICE out of L.A.!"

Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth warned that the military was ready to mobilise active-duty troops if unrest continues, saying the Marines stationed at nearby Camp Pendleton were on high alert.

Trump, therefore, signed a presidential memorandum authorising the deployment of the National Guard to "address the lawlessness that has been allowed to fester," according to a White House statement. The move was confirmed by Tom Homan, Trump's border czar, who said the troops would be deployed immediately.

California Governor Gavin Newsom sharply criticised the decision, calling it purposefully inflammatory. In a statement on X (formerly Twitter), Newsom accused the administration of staging a spectacle rather than responding to any real threat.

"Don't give them one," "Never use violence. Speak out peacefully," he urged and further condemned



Hegseth's remarks about using active-duty Marines, calling them deranged.

Trump, in a post on Truth Social, criticised both Newsom and Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass, saying, "If they can't do their jobs, then the Federal Government will step in and solve the problems "RIOTS & LOOTERS the way it should be solved!!!"

The protests underscore growing tension between the Democratic-led city and Trump's Republican administration, which has doubled down on hardline immigration enforcement in his second term. Los Angeles, a city with a large Hispanic and immigrant population, has been at the forefront of opposition to Trump's immigration policies.

Commenting on the protests, Vice President J.D. Vance posted on X: "Insurrectionists carrying foreign flags are attacking immigration enforcement officers, while one half of America's political leadership has decided that border enforcement is evil."

White House adviser Stephen Miller, a staunch immigration hardliner, described the protests as a "violent insurrection."

Officials said the National Guard troops could be operational within 24 hours. Military planners were working Saturday to coordinate the logistics of the deployment.

The White House cited the 1807 Insurrection Act, which permits a president to deploy U.S. troops domestically to suppress civil disorder. The law was last invoked during the 1992 Los Angeles riots, then at the request of California's governor.

Video from the Paramount protest showed rows of uniformed federal agents in gas masks facing off against protesters on streets cluttered with overturned shopping carts. Tear gas canisters were seen detonating, and several demonstrators were detained as authorities moved in to restore order.

Mass protest hits Madrid over scandals of Spanish PM Sánchez

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso

Tens of thousands of demonstrators packed into Madrid's Plaza de España on Sunday, calling for the resignation of Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez and an immediate general election amid a growing wave of corruption scandals engulfing his government, party, and family.

Organised by the opposition conservative People's Party (PP), the protest took place under the charged slogan "Mafia or Democracy," drawing between 45,000 and 50,000 people, according to official estimates. Organisers, however, claimed attendance topped 100,000.

Pedro Sánchez's Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) has been rocked by a cascade of corruption accusations in recent months. The latest controversy surrounds Leire Díaz, a former party member, who resigned after leaked recordings suggested she offered judicial leniency in exchange for damaging information on police officers investigating key figures linked to the prime minister. Díaz has denied acting on behalf of the party or Sánchez, stating she was conducting research for a book on corruption.

The probe includes scrutiny of Sánchez's wife, Begoña Gómez, who is under investigation for alleged corruption and influence peddling. The case stems from a complaint by far-right-linked group Manos Limpias, which alleges she used her status to benefit a university program she ran. Sánchez has dismissed the claims as "baseless" and politically motivated.

The prime minister's brother, David Sánchez, is also facing trial over alleged influence peddling, while former transport minister José Luis Ábalos remains under suspicion after his



assistant was arrested last year for allegedly profiting from face mask contracts during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As protesters waved placards reading "Sánchez Traitor" and "Government Resign," PP leader Alberto Núñez Feijóo seized the moment to ramp up pressure on the prime minister.

"Spain needs a revolution of decency and freedom," Feijóo told the crowd. "Mr. Sánchez, stop hiding, stop lying, and stop running. Yield to democracy. Call an election."

Sánchez reacts

Sánchez, however, has accused opposition forces and right-wing media of orchestrating a targeted campaign to destroy him politically and personally, calling it a "harassment and bullying operation" aimed particularly at his wife.

While the PSOE faces mounting criticism, the PP has not escaped scrutiny. The party is still shadowed by

past corruption scandals and is currently facing criticism over its handling of deadly floods in Valencia, a region under its governance.

Madrid's populist regional president, Isabel Díaz Ayuso, one of Sánchez's fiercest critics, has also come under fire. Her partner, Alberto González Amador, is being investigated for tax fraud and forgery linked to pandemic-era contracts. Ayuso has claimed the investigation is a political witch hunt due to her relationship with him.

In response to the protest, government officials sought to downplay its impact. Digital transformation minister Óscar López said the rally was "a distraction from Feijóo's weak leadership and Ayuso's scandals," while transport minister Óscar Puente posted aerial images showing the plaza was not at full capacity.

"They're nervous," López wrote on X. "They filled the Plaza de España with insults, not with people ... While they sling mud, we move forward."

Andrew Tate to appear in Romanian court after alleged speeding violation

By Elizabeth Jenrola Oso



Controversial influencer Andrew Tate is set to appear in court in Romania on Monday following allegations that he was caught speeding at a dangerous 196 km/h (122 mph) in a 50 km/h zone, more than three times the legal limit.

Tate, 38, a British-American former kickboxer known globally for his inflammatory social media presence and self-proclaimed “misogynist” persona, was stopped early Saturday morning near Râmnicu Vâlcea, approximately 110 miles northwest of Bucharest. Romanian police allege his vehicle was clocked by radar racing through the area in the pre-dawn hours.

According to Romanian media sources, the traffic infraction led to Tate’s license being suspended for 120 days. He was also fined 1,822 lei, approximately £305. Police cited the offence as a serious violation given the excessive speed and local regulations.

Andrew Tate acknowledges incident

Tate acknowledged the incident on the social media platform X (formerly Twitter), where he mocked the situation and denied the charges. In his post, he insisted the police radar was likely “calibrated incorrectly” and claimed he would “never” drive at such speeds.

“This morning at 6:15 a.m., on an empty mountain pass... I was stopped by police and accused of speeding,” he wrote. “They said I was driving 197 [km/h] on a 40 [km/h] in one of my 100 sports cars... My licence must be suspended for four months and I would have to pay the crippling fine of 300 USD. I can NOT afford this bill,” he added sarcastically.

Tate’s court appearance on Monday is the latest in a string of legal woes. He and his brother, Tristan Tate, currently reside in Romania, where they are facing a series of serious criminal charges, including trafficking minors, sexual exploitation, and money laundering.

A separate case against the Tate brothers involving human trafficking and the formation of a criminal group to sexually

exploit women was recently returned to Romanian prosecutors for further review. Both men have denied all allegations.

Their legal troubles extend beyond Romanian borders. UK prosecutors have filed charges against the pair in connection with offences allegedly committed between 2012 and 2015. Andrew Tate faces 10 charges including rape, actual bodily harm, human trafficking, and controlling prostitution for profit, linked to three alleged victims. Tristan Tate is facing 11 charges, including rape and human trafficking, related to one alleged victim.

Bedfordshire police in the UK issued international arrest warrants for the brothers, who are expected to be extradited to Britain once proceedings in Romania conclude.

Despite the serious nature of the accusations and growing international scrutiny, Tate remains publicly defiant, continuing to cultivate his online image built around luxury, provocation, and dominance.

UK immigration crackdown sparks industry alarm, family hardship

By Olaoluwa Vincent Ajayi



Business leaders, skilled workers, and families across the UK are raising fresh concerns over the government's latest immigration reforms, as a sweeping extension to settlement rules begins to take hold.

Under the changes, immigrants will now have to wait ten years — double the previous period — to qualify for indefinite leave to remain (ILR), a status that offers long-term security and access to public benefits. The move, aimed at reducing net migration, is already rippling across key sectors of the economy.

For one City of London banker, documented by Bloomberg, the cost is immediate: an extra £40,000 a year in university fees for his children, who no longer qualify for domestic tuition rates. In care homes, managers warn of a looming workforce crisis, as the government phases out overseas recruitment in the sector by 2028.

"This is a crushing blow to an already fragile sector," said the charity Care England, highlighting the care industry's dependence on foreign staff for roles many UK workers shun.

The reforms come amid intensifying political pressure. With net migration quadrupling between 2019 and 2023, the government is seeking to shore up public confidence ahead of looming elections. But business leaders and immigration experts warn the changes could inflict long-term damage on the UK's competitiveness.

"Ten years is a very long time to spend without certainty," said James, immigration lawyer. "The UK already has one of the most expensive immigration schemes globally."

Corporate unease

In the City of London, uncertainty is rising. One senior financial services employee is now contemplating

relocating to Dubai or the US to avoid spiralling education costs. Another worker at an international bank told Bloomberg she regretted moving to London from Asia, having purchased a home in the belief that permanent residency would be secured within five years.

Now, she faces the prospect of waiting a decade, during which her ability to change jobs is uncertain. "Had I known it might take this long, I would not have come," she said.

Businesses must also shoulder rising costs. Companies will pay the government's £1,000 annual immigration skills charge for an extra five years under the new regime. While large banks may absorb the costs, smaller firms could struggle.

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“Small business owners are not immigration officers,” said Craig Beaumont, executive director of the Federation of Small Businesses. Recruitment experts also warn that the changes could hinder efforts to attract global talent.

“To retain experienced international staff, we need visas that align with the reality of families moving to the UK,” said Arabella Ramage, legal director at Lloyd’s Market Association, which forecasts the insurance sector will lose 260,000 skilled workers by 2035.

The reforms will also hit sectors such as pharmaceuticals and hospitality, which

depend on a steady pipeline of international talent. For scientists, the added paperwork and delays could make the UK a less attractive destination.

Policy still in flux

Details of the ILR rules are still being finalised. Immigration minister Seema Malhotra has confirmed it remains unclear whether the new rules will apply retroactively to those already in the UK.

Some pathways to accelerated ILR may remain for migrants making strong economic contributions, though criteria have yet to be determined.

But lawyers caution that uncertainty is widespread. “The government’s intention is clearly to make immigration more difficult,” said immigration barrister Catherine Taroni. “The white paper is very broad and all-encompassing.”

Critics warn the measures risk undermining the UK’s reputation as a global hub for high-skilled talent. “We’ve seen a lot of people looking at alternative options around the world,” said Seema Farazi, global immigration leader at EY.

For now, many workers — and the companies that rely on them — remain in limbo.

Britain to invest \$116bn in research, development under new spending plan

By **Fatimah Idera**

British Finance Minister Rachel Reeves will allocate £86 billion (\$116 billion) to research and development as part of this week’s comprehensive spending review, the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) announced on Sunday.

The investment package will support a wide range of initiatives from pioneering drug treatments and next-generation batteries to breakthroughs in artificial intelligence.

According to the DSIT, annual funding for R&D will grow to more than £22.5 billion by the 2029/30 fiscal year, with the goal of fostering innovation, job creation, and long-term economic growth.



On Wednesday, Reeves is set to distribute over £2 trillion (\$2.7 trillion) in public funds among government departments, a critical moment that will shape the trajectory of the Labour government, now in its second year, over the next four years.

This latest R&D announcement follows Reeves’ recent pledge of £15.6 billion in government investment for local transport upgrades in key city regions across Northern England, the Midlands, and the South West underscoring a broader strategy to modernise infrastructure and boost regional economies.

Shift green levy from bills to taxes, British gas boss tells Reeves

By **Fatimah Idera**

The Chief Executive of Centrica, the parent company of British Gas, has urged Chancellor Rachel Reeves to move the green levy from household energy bills to general taxation, arguing that the current system places an unfair burden on consumers.

Chris O'Shea said the UK's transition to net zero requires substantial investment, and the costs should be more equitably distributed. He warned that, under the current approach, households are footing too much of the bill.

Speaking on BBC Radio 4's Broadcasting House, O'Shea explained: "The cost of the energy transition is not small. It's not because renewables are expensive, but because we're overhauling an outdated energy system. At the moment, those costs are passed directly onto energy bills. There's an alternative funding them through general taxation, which Centrica would support."

He acknowledged the Chancellor faces difficult choices ahead of the upcoming spending review, but emphasised that someone will ultimately have to pay either consumers, businesses, or taxpayers.

What green levy is

Green levy charges are added to bills to help fund renewable energy projects that are under increasing



scrutiny. While they support the government's 2050 net-zero goal, critics say they contribute to high energy costs that are hitting households and businesses hard.

The independent Climate Change Committee recently called for these levies to be removed from electricity bills altogether, suggesting the cost could instead be spread through gas bills or covered by public funds. The committee warned that high electricity prices are deterring people from switching to electric cars and heat pumps, slowing progress toward decarbonisation.

Business groups have echoed those concerns. Rain Newton-Smith, head of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), recently warned that the costs of achieving net zero were acting as a drag on the UK economy.

Although energy regulator Ofgem has announced a £129 reduction to the price cap next month, offering temporary relief to households,

energy bills remain a key political issue as the UK advances its shift to renewables.

At the same time, Labour's energy strategy is facing internal tension. Party leader Sir Keir Starmer has intervened in a debate over proposed "zonal pricing" reforms, which could lead to higher electricity costs in the South than in the North. Proponents say the move could save consumers up to £52 billion overall.

O'Shea stressed the importance of increasing energy storage capacity to bring long-term price stability. But he warned that simply moving costs between regions or customer groups wouldn't address the core issue: "The cost has to be met by the country. The real question is—who pays?"

His remarks follow backlash over his compensation. O'Shea received a £4.3 million pay package last year, including a 29% salary increase.

Portugal edge Spain on penalties to win 2025 UEFA Nations League title

By Damilola Olufemi



Portugal clinched their second UEFA Nations League title on Sunday night in Munich after a dramatic 5-3 penalty shootout victory over Spain, following a 2-2 draw in regular and extra time.

Rúben Neves scored the decisive penalty, sealing the win after Spain's Álvaro Morata saw his effort saved by Diogo Costa. It was a historic moment, marking just Portugal's second competitive win over their Iberian rivals.

The match saw Portugal come from behind twice. Spain took the lead in the 21st minute through Martín Zubimendi, who capitalised on slack Portuguese defending to smash the ball into the net after a failed clearance. But Portugal responded almost immediately, with Nuno Mendes firing a low shot past Unai Simón after being set up by Pedro Neto.

Just before halftime, Spain regained the lead. After pressing high and forcing a turnover, Pedri played in Mikel Oyarzabal, who coolly slotted past Costa. The goal continued Oyarzabal's

remarkable record in finals, having scored in three straight international showpieces: the Euro 2024 final against England and both the 2023 and 2025 Nations League finals.

Portugal's talisman, Cristiano Ronaldo, had been relatively quiet, much like in the semifinal against Germany, until his winner, but he came alive in the 61st minute. After a deflected Mendes cross looped into the air, Ronaldo outmuscled Marc Cucurella and blasted a volley into the net to make it 2-2. It was his fourth career goal against Spain, the first since his famous hat-trick at the 2018 World Cup.

Ronaldo left the field late in the second half with cramps and did not take part in extra time, during which Portugal looked the stronger side. Despite their dominance, the match headed to penalties.

Both teams converted their first three spot kicks. Mendes slotted home Portugal's fourth, and then Morata failed to convert his, shooting straight at Costa. Neves

stepped up and coolly converted to secure the title, sparking wild celebrations from the Portuguese players—Ronaldo among them, hobbling onto the pitch to join his teammates.

Portugal becomes first nation to win Nations League twice. This triumph makes Portugal the first country to win the Nations League twice since the competition's inception in 2018. It also adds a third major trophy to their collection, following the Euro 2016 and the 2019 Nations League title.

While Spain began the match on the front foot with quick, intelligent movement from Nico Williams and teenage star Lamine Yamal, their opening goal was the result of defensive confusion rather than brilliance. Portugal, however, showed resilience and attacking quality in their fightbacks.

The final was a showcase of Iberian football at its dramatic best—an intense, high-quality contest settled by nerves and precision from the spot, with Portugal coming out on top.

Pochettino dismisses talk of Tottenham return

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

Mauricio Pochettino has distanced himself from a potential return to Tottenham Hotspur following the club's sacking of manager Ange Postecoglou. The Argentine, now head coach of the United States national team, insisted a reunion with the North London club is "not realistic" at this time.

Speaking after the United States' 2-1 friendly loss to Turkey in Connecticut, Pochettino addressed speculation linking him with the vacancy at Spurs, following Postecoglou's dismissal on Friday. Despite winning the Europa League — Tottenham's first major trophy in 17 years — Postecoglou was let go after failing to secure Champions League qualification and overseeing a poor end to the Premier League campaign.

Pochettino, who previously managed Spurs from 2014 to 2019, enjoyed a successful five-year spell in charge. Under his leadership, Tottenham reached the Champions League final in 2019 and finished second in the Premier League in 2017. His departure, however, came after a run of poor form, and he has since had managerial stints at Paris Saint-Germain and Chelsea.

Now leading the US national team as they prepare to co-host the 2026 FIFA World Cup, Pochettino insists his focus remains firmly on the American project.

"Today it's not realistic," the 53-year-old said when asked about a possible return to Spurs. "Look where I am. Look where we are as a staff. The answer is very clear.

"Since I left in 2019, my name has always been on the list whenever there is a managerial change. I've seen the rumours — we're probably one of a hundred names linked. But I'm happy with where I am now, and I don't think



it's the time to speak about these things."

Appointed as USMNT head coach in October 2024, Pochettino's early tenure has seen mixed results. His record currently stands at five wins and four defeats from nine matches. The team's recent form has raised questions, especially given the high expectations as the United States prepares to host the World Cup alongside Canada and Mexico.

Nevertheless, Pochettino seems committed to the long-term vision with the U.S., downplaying any possibility of a premature exit.

"If something happens in the future, we'll see," he added. "But right now, I'm fully committed to the task ahead. We have a huge tournament coming up, and that's where all of our energy is going."

Meanwhile, Tottenham have already begun the search for Postecoglou's successor. Brentford manager Thomas Frank is reportedly a leading candidate, known for his tactical acumen and

ability to work within tight financial structures. Fulham's Marco Silva is also under consideration, having impressed with his work in west London.

In other news from the club, veteran defender Ben Davies has extended his contract until the summer of 2026. The 32-year-old Welsh international, who joined Spurs in 2014, is now the club's longest-serving senior player. He has made 358 appearances in all competitions and remains a reliable presence in the squad.

"I'm proud to continue my journey with Tottenham," Davies said in a club statement. "I've been through many highs and lows here, and I still believe in the direction the club is heading."

With managerial uncertainty looming and a rebuild possibly on the horizon, Tottenham find themselves at yet another crossroads. While Pochettino's return may have stirred fan nostalgia, the club will need to look elsewhere as they attempt to navigate the post-Postecoglou era and build for the future.

Usyk invites Trump to experience Ukraine war firsthand

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi



Unified heavyweight champion Oleksandr Usyk has extended a bold invitation to former U.S. President Donald Trump, urging him to spend a week in his home in war-torn Ukraine. The Ukrainian boxer's emotional message comes as part of a continued effort to bring international attention to the daily horrors endured by his country amid Russia's ongoing invasion.

Speaking to BBC Sport ahead of his July 19 rematch against Britain's Daniel Dubois at Wembley Stadium, Usyk shared a personal and passionate response to Trump's controversial claim that he could end the Ukraine war "within 24 hours" if re-elected.

"I advise American President Donald Trump to come to Ukraine and live in my house for one week," he said. "Only one week. I will give him my house. Live please in Ukraine and watch what is going on every night. Every night, there are bombs and flights above my house. Bombs, rockets. Every night. It's enough."

His comments follow Trump's continued criticism of Ukraine's leadership, including blaming President Volodymyr

Zelensky for "starting the war" and suggesting a lack of gratitude from Kyiv for U.S. involvement in diplomatic efforts. Earlier this year, Zelensky was asked to leave the White House following a tense exchange with Trump during which the former president demanded more appreciation for American assistance.

Whether Trump would ever accept such an invitation is uncertain, but the boxer believes seeing the devastation firsthand could shift his perspective. "Maybe he'll understand, maybe he won't. Ukrainian people are dying. It's not just military guys, but children, women, grandmothers, and grandfathers. For me, it's hard. It's my country. I worry about what happens in my country," he added.

Read also: Usyk vs Dubois: Oscar act or clean Fight?

Since Russia launched its full-scale invasion in 2022, Ukraine has endured relentless airstrikes, displacements, and loss of civilian life.

The 37-year-old became a symbol of resilience when he defeated Anthony Joshua in August 2022 and dedicated the victory to Ukraine. That emotional night marked not just a sporting triumph but a

national statement, demonstrating that Ukrainians would not be silenced or diminished.

His upcoming fight against Dubois presents more than just a sporting challenge. A win would make Usyk a two-time undisputed heavyweight champion and solidify his legacy. However, for the fighter-turned-symbol, the title is not his only battle.

"I fight in the ring for my family, for my people, for my country," Usyk said. "But the real fight is happening every day at home. We need peace. We need support. We need the world to see what's really happening."

The rematch at Wembley on July 19 is expected to draw global attention, especially as it pits Usyk's quest for undisputed glory against Dubois' chance to make history as the first Englishman to win all four major heavyweight titles.

But no matter the outcome in the ring, Usyk's most powerful punches may come from the message he continues to deliver outside of it — a plea for understanding, empathy, and global solidarity with Ukraine in its time of need.

Spalletti announces exit after Italy's loss to Norway

By Timi-Zacchaeus Oluwaferanmi

In a dramatic and emotional news conference on Sunday, Italy head coach Luciano Spalletti announced that he would be leaving his role following the team's 3-0 defeat to Norway in their opening World Cup 2026 qualifier.

The 66-year-old revealed that Italian Football Federation president Gabriele Gravina informed him of his dismissal after the disappointing result in Oslo. Despite the news, Spalletti confirmed he would still take charge of Monday's qualifier against Moldova before officially stepping down.

"Last night we were very together with president Gravina," Spalletti told reporters. "He told me that I will be relieved of my position as coach of the national team. I had no intention of giving up. I would have preferred to stay in my place and continue doing my job."

The announcement came as a shock, not just for its content but for the raw, unfiltered manner in which Spalletti delivered it. Sitting at a desk with evident frustration, the former Napoli and Inter Milan boss expressed both sorrow and defiance. The press conference ended abruptly as Spalletti stormed out, clearly emotional about the decision.

Spalletti took over as Italy manager in 2023 after guiding Napoli to a historic Serie A title. Hailed at the time as a modernizer and a motivator, he was tasked with reinvigorating a national side that failed to qualify for the 2022 World Cup. However, his tenure has been marked by inconsistency.

Italy exited Euro 2024 in the last 16 after a dismal 2-0 defeat to Switzerland, and Friday's loss to Norway added further pressure. Three first-half goals from the Norwegians left the Azzurri reeling, with defensive lapses and a lack of cohesion exposing deep-rooted issues within the squad.



Spalletti's overall record as national team coach now stands at 23 games, with 11 wins, five draws, and seven defeats — a record many felt was not befitting of a side with Italy's footballing pedigree.

"I love this shirt, this job, and the players I've coached," Spalletti added. "These are the results under my management, and I have to take responsibility. Tomorrow night I'll ask the players to demonstrate what I've been asking of them, even if I haven't managed to get them to show their best."

Italy's World Cup qualifying campaign now faces a period of uncertainty. They sit in Group I alongside Norway, Moldova, Estonia, and Israel. The loss to Norway has already put them on the back foot, and without a clear successor in place, the leadership vacuum could prove damaging in the crucial months ahead.

Gravina, who has not yet publicly commented on the dismissal, is expected to name an interim replacement following the Moldova

game. Early speculation suggests that Roberto De Zerbi, currently at Brighton, or former Italy manager Roberto Mancini could be among those considered for the role.

Italian media and fans alike have responded with mixed emotions. While some believe Spalletti's exit was inevitable following poor tournament performances and a lack of attacking fluency, others see it as a premature decision that ignores his potential to build a long-term project.

One thing is certain: the mood in the Italian camp is fragile. Spalletti's final match against Moldova will not only mark the end of his tenure but could also serve as a critical juncture in Italy's path toward rebuilding both identity and results on the international stage.

With the 2026 World Cup qualifiers just beginning, the Azzurri must act swiftly to stabilize and find a new direction — one capable of honoring their rich footballing history while embracing the challenges of a new era.